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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995

Revised estimates under sections 3A, 3B, 3C, 4, 8, 15, 24 and 28

Eleventh report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/49/44) on revised estimates under sections 3A, 3B, 3C, 4, 8, 15, 24 and 28 of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995. During its consideration of the report, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional up-to-date information.

2. The Committee had previously considered the Secretary-General's report but, owing to time constraints, had made only brief comments and recommendations on the subject in its report contained in document A/49/7/Add.4.

3. As indicated in paragraph 2 of the Secretary-General's report, by its resolution 48/258 A of 23 June 1994, the General Assembly considered that the mandate of the Special Committee against Apartheid had been successfully concluded and decided to terminate it as of that date. As a result, total resources that had been approved for sections 3A, 3C and 24 of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 would not be required for activities relating to apartheid.

4. As indicated in the summary of the Secretary-General's report, total resources approved for activities relating to the elimination of apartheid under sections 3A, 3C and 24 of the programme budget for 1994-1995 amounted to $9,163,800; expenditures for these activities for 1994 are estimated at $3,435,100. The Advisory Committee points out that this rate of expenditure is disproportionately high to the totality of resources available for the entire biennium. The Advisory Committee requested the relevant accounting data and is

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still awaiting a response. Of the balance of $5,728,700, proposals in respect of some $4,686,000 are made by the Secretary-General with respect to sections 3, 4, 8, 15 and 24 of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 (see A/C.5/49/44, paras. 65-86 and 99-104).

5. In this connection, by its resolution 49/219, the General Assembly approved the continuation of six temporary posts for the servicing of the Security Council Sanctions Committee with the related costs, estimated at $439,800, to be met from resources currently appropriated under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995. Information provided to the Committee indicates that the increased workload may be such as to warrant more than the six posts already granted. The Secretary-General may wish to review the situation and report as necessary.

6. By the same resolution, the General Assembly decided to "accept the redeployment of $576,600 from section 3 to section 8, Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 for activities related to the International Convention to Combat Desertification as proposed by the Secretary-General in his report (A/C.5/49/44, para. 81), subject to review and adjustment by the Advisory Committee and the General Assembly". The Advisory Committee has no objection to the transfer of $576,600. By the same resolution the General Assembly also decided to accept the transfer of $428,500 from section 3 to section 8 as proposed by the Secretary-General in paragraphs 78 to 80 of his report, pursuant to the requests contained in General Assembly resolutions 48/228 and 48/260, thus expending $1,444,900 from the total of $4,686,000 in respect of which proposals are made by the Secretary-General.

7. The remainder of the proposals in the Secretary-General's report that now need to be considered by the General Assembly relate to utilization of the balance of $3,241,100 of the resources released as a result of termination of activities against apartheid.

8. Upon termination of the mandate of the Special Committee against Apartheid on 23 June 1994, the related activities were terminated and, in the opinion of the Advisory Committee, the corresponding posts should have also ceased to exist. The Advisory Committee points out that the Secretary-General's proposals for redeployment are in fact proposals for the creation of new posts and should be considered as such. The representatives of the Secretary-General have concurred in this opinion. In this connection, the Advisory Committee points out further, as it has in the past, that the abolition of posts should not preclude the reassignment of staff who have been affected by such abolition (see A/49/7/Add.4, para. 5).

9. In the opinion of the Advisory Committee, any proposals for creation of posts or deployment of posts in support of activities other than those for which the posts were originally authorized should be accompanied by information on legislative mandates and correlation of activities, as well as details on workload and classification levels of posts requested. The Advisory Committee regrets that this information has not been included in the report.

10. The Advisory Committee recalls that, in resolution 48/228, the General Assembly, with regard to section 9 of the programme budget, had requested the Secretary-General to "provide adequate posts for activities dealing with microeconomic issues through redeployment". This request of the General Assembly should have been given priority in the proposals of the Secretary-General. From his report, however, it is not possible to determine whether this request in resolution 48/228 has been taken into consideration.

Posts proposed for section 3

11. The consolidated structure of the Department of Political Affairs as approved by General Assembly resolution 48/231 is described in paragraphs 56 to 64 of the Secretary-General's report. Of the 24 posts indicated in table 2 of the Secretary-General's report, 10 posts are proposed for the Department of Political Affairs. Although corresponding details as to workload, activities and related mandates as referred to in paragraph 9 above have not been provided in the report, some information outlining the increase in the overall activities within the Department, due mainly to the establishment of a number of peace-keeping operations, is contained in paragraphs 65 and 66 of the Secretary-General's report. However, additional information supplied to the Advisory Committee indicates that these posts will deal, inter alia, with preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution, good offices, research and collection and analysis of information.

12. Of the 10 posts, 3 Professional (1 P-5, 1 P-4 and 1 P-3) and 1 General Service (other level) established posts are proposed for the Africa I Division of the Department in order to strengthen that Division; 3 General Service (other level) posts are proposed for the Africa II Division. The related estimate for these seven posts is $755,900 (see A/C.5/49/44, para. 67). The Advisory Committee recommends acceptance of the Secretary-General's proposal.

13. As indicated in paragraph 68 of the report, a P-4 is proposed to be retained to strengthen the electoral assistance unit; the related cost of the P-4 post is estimated at $152,200. The Advisory Committee was provided with information regarding the increase in activities in the unit during 1994 and agrees with the proposed retention of the post in the electoral assistance unit.

14. As indicated in paragraph 69 of the report, a D-2 post for the Director of the General Assembly Affairs Division and one General Service (other level) post to provide secretarial assistance are being proposed at an estimated cost of $281,800. As indicated to the Advisory Committee, the functions of the D-2 post involve overall responsibility for the work of the General Assembly, including directing and coordinating the servicing of the Assembly, its General Committee and ad hoc working groups. The Advisory Committee does not object to the Secretary-General's proposal with regard to these two posts.

Section 4

15. As indicated in paragraph 77 of his report, the Secretary-General is proposing the transfer of an established D-1 post from section 3 of the programme budget to section 4 (Department of Peace-keeping Operations). The Advisory Committee notes that during 1994 this post had originally been

authorized for activities related to apartheid but was "temporarily made available to the Department of Peace-keeping Operations to reinforce its Africa Division". In view of its functions to "reinforce" the staffing in the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, the Advisory Committee believes that at the present time this post should continue on a provisional basis, pending its review by the Advisory Committee in the context of its consideration of the Secretary-General's report on the support account as well as the proposed programme budget for 1996-1997. The Advisory Committee's views with regard to the establishment of posts in support of peace-keeping activities and the role of the regular budget have been reflected in its report contained in document A/48/955.

16. The Advisory Committee recalls that, in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995, the Secretary-General had proposed the establishment of a total of 18 new posts under section 4 (Peace-keeping operations and special missions), including 10 posts for the Situation Room (now Situation Centre) in that Department (see A/48/6/Rev.1, sect. 4, para. 4.9).

17. Although the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the 10 posts for the Situation Centre should not be approved was accepted by the General Assembly, the related costs of $1.6 million for the 10 posts were included in the total appropriation for the biennium 1994-1995. The Advisory Committee expects that, in accordance with United Nations Financial Regulations and Rules, the unspent balance of appropriations relating to these 10 posts will be returned to Member States.

18. As indicated in table 2 of the Secretary-General's report, of the 24 posts, a total of 8 Professional posts (1 D-1, 1 P-5, 1 P-4, 2 P-3, and 3 P-2) and 4 General Service (other level) established posts and 1 temporary General Service (other level) post are proposed to be abolished. The Advisory Committee was informed that, on the assumption that the General Assembly approves the proposal of the Secretary-General, two staff members at the Professional level and five at the General Service level would remain without posts.

Proposed non-post resources within section 3

19. With regard to non-post resources, as indicated in paragraph 74 of the Secretary-General's report, an amount of $1,131,100 is being proposed for activities related to a special mission to Afghanistan called for in General Assembly resolution 48/208 of 21 December 1993, and two subsequent missions as well as the Secretary-General's proposal to extend the special mission and related activities through 1995.

20. As indicated in paragraph 75 of the Secretary-General's report a further amount of $125,000 is proposed to be deployed to the Department of Political Affairs "to provide for the increased workload of the Department with respect to its core departmental function providing secretariat services to the Security Council", specifically for such items as general temporary assistance, overtime and communications. The Advisory Committee recommends acceptance of this proposal.

Non-post resources for section 15

21. As indicated in paragraphs 83 to 86 of the Secretary-General's report, an amount of $119,700 is being proposed for deployment to the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI). A breakdown of the expenditures to be covered is given in paragraph 85 of the Secretary-General's report.

22. The Advisory Committee recalls that, in accordance with the statute of UNAFRI, its administrative and programme costs were to be financed from the assessed contributions of African States under a specific scale of assessments, while its operational activities were to be funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). As indicated in paragraph 84 of the Secretary-General's report, UNDP decided to cease its contribution to the Institute as of October 1994. In this regard, however, the Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 29 of the Secretary-General's report relating to crime prevention and criminal justice (A/49/712), that "consultations are still continuing regarding the future status of UNAFRI".

23. The General Assembly, in section II, paragraph 32, of its resolution 48/228 of 23 December 1993, requested the Secretary-General to keep the financial situation of the Institute under active review and to submit proposals for any necessary additional funding for the Institute. This request to the Secretary-General was reiterated by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1994/21, which also requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the Institute was provided with adequate funds. On 23 December 1994, the General Assembly adopted resolution 49/156 requesting the Secretary-General "to ensure that the Institute be provided with adequate funds, within the overall appropriation of the programme budget and from extrabudgetary resources, and to submit proposals for any necessary additional funding of the Institute".

24. In this connection, the Advisory Committee recalls that, in the context of its consideration of the programme budget implications of the Secretary-General's statement contained in document A/C.5/46/77, the Committee had recommended an additional appropriation of $180,000 for UNAFRI under section 23 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 subject to the procedures for the use and operation of the contingency fund. The Advisory Committee points to the lack of guidelines in the area of subsidizing regional institutes from the regular budget. The Committee therefore invites the Secretary-General, in the context of his proposed programme budget for 1996-1997, to propose criteria to determine if regional institutes should be funded from the regular budget of the United Nations. Pending such a policy decision, the General Assembly may wish to consider an appropriation of $119,700 under section 15 of the programme budget for 1994-1995 to enable the Institute to continue its operations until the end of this year.

Proposed resources within section 24

25. The appropriation under public information for activities against apartheid for the biennium 1994-1995 under section 24 of the programme budget is $3,097,800 (see A/C.5/49/44, para. 87). As indicated in paragraph 92 of the report, requirements for 1994 are estimated at $1,635,800, leaving a balance as

at 31 December 1994, of $1,462,000. Since that time and pending further action as the General Assembly may take, it is estimated that an additional amount of $240,900 will have been expended by the end of February 1995. As indicated in paragraph 104 of the report, the Secretary-General is proposing utilization of a total of $483,300 in support of 6 posts (1 P-5, 2 P-3, 1 P-2/1 and 2 General Service (other level)) out of a total of 19 posts that had originally been approved for activities against apartheid. The Advisory Committee understands therefore that 13 posts in this area are proposed to be abolished; of these 13, subject to the General Assembly accepting the Secretary-General's proposals, 8 staff members have been placed against posts while 5 staff members at the Professional level remain without posts.

26. The Advisory Committee was informed that currently there are three posts (two Professional and one General Service) in the Africa Unit of the Radio Section within the Department of Public Information. As indicated in paragraph 101 of the Secretary-General's report, it is proposed that four posts (1-P-3, 1-P-2, and 2 General Service) be retained to provide increased radio coverage of United Nations activities relating to Africa. The Committee accepts the Secretary-General's proposal for retaining these four posts.

27. With regard to the P-5 post proposed for the information component of a United Nations field office in South Africa (para. 102), the Advisory Committee notes that discussions are proceeding between the Department of Public Information, UNDP and representatives of the Government of South Africa for the establishment of such a field office; the Committee was informed that it was envisaged that the office would most probably be established towards the end of this year. Under the circumstances, the Advisory Committee recommends that the establishment of a P-5 post for the purposes outlined in paragraph 102 of the Secretary-General's report be discussed in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

28. With regard to the proposed P-3 post for the United Nations Information Service in Geneva (para. 104), the Advisory Committee was informed that a P-3 post from the staffing table of the Anti-apartheid Programmes Section had been with the United Nations Information Service in Geneva since 1990. In that capacity it has been dealing, inter alia, with coverage of activities relating to such Geneva-based intergovernmental bodies as the Commission on Human Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Conference on Disarmament, as well as other issues pertaining to Africa, for the production of radio programmes; it is required in order to continue providing coverage of these activities as well as increased coverage of United Nations activities in Europe and the Middle East. The Advisory Committee recommends acceptance of the Secretary-General's proposal with respect to this post.